

COUNTY: NORFOLK      SITE NAME: SCOULTON MERE

DISTRICT: BRECKLAND

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

Local Planning Authority: Breckland District Council

National Grid Reference: TF 985014      Area: 33.72 (ha.) 83.32 (ac.)

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 144      1:10,000: TF 90 SE

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): 1954      Date of Last Revision: –

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1984      Date of Last Revision: –

Other Information:

The boundary of this site has been reduced.

Description:

Scoulton Mere is of interest because of the swamp, fen and bog communities that occur on islands in the mere and around the shore. These support a diverse flora including several rare and uncommon plants.

The main island in Scoulton Mere, known as Scoulton Heath, is largely covered by birch woodland and willow scrub. A dense ground layer of *Sphagnum* moss has developed over much of the island suggesting the development of a raised bog.

Two of the more noteworthy species associated with the *Sphagnum* areas are crested buckler fern, a national rarity and royal fern. Towards the periphery of the area the *Sphagnum* co-exists with milk parsley, sparse reed *Phragmites australis* and lesser pond sedge, while at the edges of the island *Sphagnum* gives way to a swampy vegetation dominated by reed, lesser pond sedge, greater pond sedge and tufted sedge.

Tall fen is represented by two vegetation types. The first consists of a mosaic dominated by lesser pond sedge, purple small-reed and reed. Common associates include panicked sedge, bur-reed, hemp agrimony and broad buckler fern. Outliers of the main *Sphagnum* carpet occur in this area and the nationally rare crested buckler fern *Dryopteris cristata* occurs here.

The second type of tall fen vegetation is dominated largely by reed mace and reed and grades into swamp. Common associates of this fen/swamp transition include gipsy wort, skull cap, yellow flag, water forget-me-not and the locally rare cowbane *Cicuta virosa*. This type of vegetation occurs in a large area at the NW end of the main island and in smaller patches around the lake margins.

The flora of the lake is restricted to white and yellow water lilies. The lake is stocked with mallard and is used for coarse fishing. Small areas of mixed and coniferous woodland close to the lake edge are included within the site boundary.